

# ITEM 9-B

## CITY OF ALAMEDA

### Memorandum

To: Honorable President and  
Members of the Planning Board

From: Christina Ratcliffe, AICP  
Planner I

Date: September 24, 2012

Re: **Application for Design Review and Parking Waiver approval  
PLN12-0181 – 1518 Webster – John Carnahan.** Applicant  
requests Design Review and Parking Waiver approval to construct  
a detached garage in the rear parking area of a commercial  
property. The proposed structure would remove 1½ of 3 existing  
parking spaces.

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

On May 24, 2012, Mr. Carnahan, the property owner applied for a design review for a detached accessory structure to be used for storage in the rear of a commercial property in the C-C district on Webster Street. The site is already developed with a commercial building currently undergoing interior improvements for a proposed café. The rear of the site is accessed from Haight Street by an access easement across the neighboring property. The proposed structure would result in the removal of 1½ of the 3 existing full-sized off-street parking spaces.

Staff is recommending conditional approval of the application, contingent upon changes to the materials used in the construction of the accessory structure and the property owner's provision of a parking voucher in a nearby public parking lot to replace the off-street parking lost by the placement of the accessory structure.

### **BACKGROUND**

The subject property is a one-story commercial building built in 1926. It is located in a C-C (Community Commercial) District. The rear of the property abuts an R-5 (General Residential) district. A tall (~18-foot) masonry wall separates the church from the parking lot where the accessory structure is proposed.

There are three off-street parking spaces on the site currently, accessible from Haight Street. This access is provided by an existing easement on the property immediately adjacent to the subject property on the corner of Haight and Webster. The applicant proposes a 392 square foot accessory structure with a maximum height of 13-feet, 6-inches featuring a slant roof. The proposed materials are T1-11 vertical siding and a metal roof. The 14-foot wide structure

and would eliminate 1<sup>1/2</sup> of the 3 full-sized off-street parking spaces that currently exist within the 30-foot wide rear area.



Figure 1. Street Frontage of Subject Property

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Design Review**

Section 4.0 of *The Webster Street Design Manual* states that new buildings must be compatible with Webster Street's thematic buildings and incorporate their major design characteristics. The Manual also encourages design that looks to the proportion, massing rhythm and materials of the districts thematic buildings, and to incorporate important compositional elements, although in a simplified form.

Although this structure would only be slightly visible from Haight Street, staff believes that the vertical T1-11 siding and metal roof proposed at this site would not meet the principals and goals set forth in *The Webster Street Design Manual*. Staff believes that using wood siding and a composition shingle roof would be more in keeping with the area, and would result in a more visually compatible structure.<sup>1</sup>

Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring that the applicant revise the design with wood siding and a compost shingle roof.

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<sup>1</sup> The WABA Design Committee chose not to take a position on the proposal.

## Parking Waiver

If the Planning Board approves the Design Review, the accessory structure would remove 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of the 3 full-sized off-street parking spaces. The remaining area would be 16 feet wide by 28 feet long. This would allow 1 full size and 1 compact sized space, per parking space requirements in Section 30-7.9 of the Zoning Ordinance. This would equate to an actual reduction of 1 parking space.

Section 30-7.12b of the Zoning Ordinance allows for a reduction of 1 parking space per parcel for existing facilities, with Planning Board approval. The applicant has stated that he will provide 1 parking voucher to the nearby public parking lot for employee use. This voucher would be in addition to the 2 vouchers the applicant currently maintains, for a total of 3 vouchers for the property.

The location and configuration of the parking does not lend itself to be useful as customer parking; however, staff does believe that the parking area could and should be used by employees of the business so that the employees do not park in the neighborhood.

Staff is recommending a condition of approval requiring that: 1) the applicant re-stripe the lot to provide two spaces adjacent to the new shed, and 2) the applicant purchase an additional parking voucher for employees as long as there was an operating business in the building.

## Variance

Originally, staff determined and notified the neighborhood, that the proposed shed would require a variance because Section 30-4.9A.g.6 of the Zoning Ordinance requires a setback when the structure abuts a residential property. However, upon closer inspection of the Zoning Ordinance, staff determined that the project would not require a variance because the structure is defined as an "accessory building". Per Section 30-2 Definitions, an accessory building is a *"detached subordinate building, any part of which is within a required minimum yard of the subject Zoning District, and the use is incidental to that of the main building on the same lot, or to the use of the land."*

Within the C-C district, accessory buildings are permitted (per Section 30-4.9A subsection d. Accessory Uses, Buildings, and Structures, provided that the building is for "incidental storage" and/or "accessory uses."

The accessory structure is proposed to be located on the rear property line. There is a tall (approximately 18-foot high) masonry wall located on the rear property line separating the parking lot from the adjacent church in the residential district. (See Figure 2, below.) In this specific instance, the location of the accessory structure on the rear property line would not result in any negative impact, due to the presence of the pre-existing masonry wall.



Figure 2. View of the access easement from Haight Street to rear parking area. Proposed accessory structure to be located in area in front of white car.

## **PUBLIC NOTICE**

A notice for this hearing was mailed to property owners and residents within 300 feet of the project site, published in the Alameda Journal and posted at the subject property. Staff has not received any public comments on this project as of September 11, 2012.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

This project is categorically exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, Section 15311 Class 11: Construction or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Approve the Design Review and Parking Waiver, as conditioned.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY:

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Christina Ratcliffe, AICP  
Planner I

REVIEWED BY:

Andrew Thomas  
Andrew Thomas, AICP  
Acting City Planner

Exhibits:

1. Draft Resolution
2. Site Map
3. Application
4. Plan Set